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Commission on Science and Technology for Development

Report on the ninth session (15-19 May 2006)

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Summary

At its ninth session, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development considered the agenda item "Bridging the technology gap between and within nations" as the substantive theme. The session provided an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of science and technology for development, to share national experiences and to identify specific measures needed at the national and international levels to bridge the technology gap, including the digital divide.

Under the substantive theme, the Commission recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of a resolution on science and technology for development, in which the Council would welcome the Commission work on the substantive theme while acknowledging that the technology gap between and within nations, including the digital divide, is wide and substantial. This gap severely limits efforts by the developing countries in meeting the Millennium Development Goals; it is essential that the gap is bridged if these countries are to benefit from the potential of science and technology, including information and communication technologies, and to participate effectively in a global inclusive knowledge society. The Commission observed that in many least developed countries, there is still a lack of appreciation of the critical role that science and technology plays in development. The Council thus calls on national Governments to ensure that science, technology and innovation strategies are incorporated in national development strategies, especially those addressing the Millennium Development Goals. To this end, it is recommended that countries review and upgrade their existing science, technology and innovation policies, with a view to making them more effective in serving the specific needs of national development goals.

The Commission would be requested, while continuing to fulfil its existing mandate, to enhance its future work programmes to include follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome and the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society, in accordance with paragraph 105 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

The Commission held a multi-stakeholder panel discussion on the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in United Nations system-wide follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit for the Information Society.

The Commission agreed that the substantive agenda item for the 2006-2008 review and policy cycle will be "Promoting the building of a people-centred, development-oriented and inclusive information society, with a view to enhancing digital opportunities for all people", with special emphasis on development dimensions of information and communication technologies, including risk-benefit analysis to bridge the digital divide.

A joint bureau meeting was held between the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on 16 May 2006. The President of the Council briefed the bureaux on the outcome of the Council open-ended consultation on the role of the Commission in the follow-up to the World Summit for the Information Society held the same day. The President also observed that the new role of the Commission should be reviewed by the Council, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/252. The point of departure, at the Council 2006 substantive session in July, should not be whether, but how, the Commission should assist the Economic and Social Council in the system-wide follow-up to the World Summit for the Information Society. The bureau of the Commission reiterated its willingness and readiness to undertake this new role.

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolution for adoption by the Council

1. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Science and technology for development*

The Economic and Social Council,

Welcoming the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its theme "Bridging the technology gap between and within nations" and acknowledging the need to bridge this gap, including the digital divide, and to assist developing countries to benefit from the potential of science and technology, including information and communication technologies,

Welcoming also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[1] which emphasizes the role of science and technology, including information and communication technologies, as vital for the achievement of the development goals, and taking note of the commitments contained therein,

Welcoming the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society[2] of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, and recalling the Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Geneva Plan of Action of the first phase of the Summit,

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 60/252 of 27 March 2006, in which the Assembly requests the Economic and Social Council to oversee the system-wide follow-up of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes of the World Summit for the Information Society, and to that end requests the Council, at its substantive session of 2006, to review the mandate, agenda and composition of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, including considering strengthening the Commission, taking into account the multi-stakeholder approach,

1. *Encourages* Governments to take into account the findings of the Commission, and to this end:

(a) To undertake reviews of existing science, technology and innovation policies, involving representatives from industry, academia and public sectors, to determine whether they effectively contribute to achieving national development goals, especially in the context of meeting the Millennium Development Goals;

(b) To strengthen science and technology education, both at the earliest level in educational systems, as well as at the tertiary level. Special efforts should be made to encourage young people to study science and technical subjects, taking into account gender balance;

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* For the discussion, see chap. III.

[1] See General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 60.

[2] See A/60/687.

(c) To adopt special measures to retain and attract young and talented scientists and technologists, and establish close ties with expatriate scientists and engineers;

(d) To consider fiscal measures and other incentives to encourage research and development in the private sector and joint projects between private companies and public research and development institutes, and tap into regional and international research and development networks;

(e) To launch information campaigns, in collaboration with industry associations, to ensure that technology awareness diffuses from the leading technology performers to others. Lead performers could be selected as models to showcase how technology can be improved or developed locally;

(f) To provide information and extension services to small and medium-sized enterprises on sources of technology import, and in terms of advice, financing, consultancy and marketing, through the establishment of productivity promotion centres and other technology intermediaries;

(g) To improve national mechanisms for the promotion of knowledge-based and innovative enterprises through various interventions and incentives, such as the establishment of venture capital, science parks and technology incubators;

(h) To promote the abilities of women to produce, access, diffuse and use science and technology knowledge and participate in the digital society, through equitable access to science education at all levels, affordable access to information and communication technologies, and participation in national science, technology and innovation systems;

2. *Encourages* the international community, including through the participation of the development-oriented private sector, to create an enabling environment for developing countries to implement the above-mentioned recommendations;

3. *Requests* the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to facilitate the sharing of national experiences in building technological capabilities and promote technology foresighting through multi-stakeholder partnership. To this end, the Commission is encouraged, with the support of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and through its Science and Technology for Development Network,[3] to compile and disseminate best practices pilot case studies from developing countries, with a view to promoting South-South cooperation;

4. *Invites* the Commission:

(a) To promote regional networks in appropriate technologies, as well as new and emerging technologies, such as information and communication technologies, biotechnologies and nanotechnologies;

(b) To explore, in collaboration with other partners, the possibility of undertaking a global review of experiences in open access regimes, especially with regard to free and open source software and open academic and scientific journals;

(c) To encourage the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which serves as the secretariat to the Commission, to collaborate with the

[3] See http://stdev.unctad.org.

International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and others to track progress in information and communication technologies development and to analyse the digital divide and, through the compilation of various national and regional experiences in the relevant policy areas, showcase policy options and strategies that countries have successfully adopted to foster information and communication technologies development;

(d) To encourage the relevant bodies of the United Nations system engaged in biotechnology to work cooperatively within an integrated framework in the context of UN-Biotech to help developing countries build productive capacity in biotechnology, particularly in key areas, such as industry, health and agriculture, as well as in risk assessment and biosafety. Such a framework should take advantage of existing programmes implemented by the members of UN-Biotech, as well as new programmes, such as the network of centres of excellence established by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, following initiatives and recommendations of the Commission;

5. *Requests* United Nations system entities engaged in the implementation of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes of the World Summit for the Information Society to collaborate closely with the Commission on Science and Technology for Development by providing it with periodic reports on the progress made in the implementation of the main themes and Action Lines of the World Summit for the Information Society, with a view to enabling the Commission to monitor, review and appraise progress achieved and problems encountered in the implementation, and to advise the Council thereon.

New substantive theme and other activities

Recalling its decision 2005/308 of 27 July 2005 on the methods of work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, in which the Council decided that, in order for the Commission to fulfil its mandate, the Commission would adopt a biennial programme of work beginning at its ninth session, in the first year focusing on policy analyses and in the second year focusing on operational aspects and implementation, and that the Commission should strengthen the connection between its review of implementation and its policy recommendations,

Recalling also that in that same decision the Council decided that the Commission should encourage the active participation of civil society and the private sector in its panels, electronic working groups and annual sessions,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, in which the General Assembly invited the functional commissions and relevant follow-up mechanisms, as appropriate, to contribute, from their specific perspectives, to the assessment by the Economic and Social Council of the cross-sectoral thematic issue selected for the coordination segment of its substantive session,

Recognizing that the organization of work of the Commission should contribute to advancing the implementation of the science and technology-related commitments contained in the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[1] and the system-wide follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society,

Recognizing also that the implementation of the science and technology-related commitments contained in the 2005 World Summit Outcome[1] and follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit for the Information Society are mutually reinforcing in unleashing the power of science and technology for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration,

1. *Requests* the Commission, while continuing with its existing science and technology for development mandate, to enhance its future work programmes to include follow-up to the outcomes of the 2005 World Summit and the World Summit for the Information Society, in accordance with paragraph 105 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society;[2]

2. *Decides* that the theme for the 2006-2008 review and policy cycle will be: "Promoting the building of a people-centred, development-oriented and inclusive information society, with a view to enhancing digital opportunities for all people". Special emphasis will be given to development dimensions of information and communication technologies, including risk-benefit analysis, to bridge the digital divide.

B. Draft decision for adoption by the Council

2. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its ninth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the tenth session of the Commission*

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its ninth session;[4]

(b) Approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the tenth session of the Commission as set out below.

Provisional agenda and documentation for the tenth session of the Commission

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

2. Substantive theme: "Promoting the building of a people-centred, development-oriented and inclusive information society, with a view to enhancing digital opportunities for all people".

   Documentation

   Report of the Secretary-General

3. Implementation of and progress made on decisions taken at the ninth session of the Commission.

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* For the discussion, see chap. VII.

[4] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2006, Supplement No. 11* (E/2006/31).

Documentation

Note by the secretariat

4. Election of the Chairperson and other officers for the eleventh session of the Commission.

5. Provisional agenda and documentation for the eleventh session of the Commission.

6. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its tenth session.

C. Decision brought to the attention of the Council

3. The following decision adopted by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development is brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council:

Decision 9/101
Documents considered by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its ninth session

4. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development takes note of the following documents, which were before it at its ninth session:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on bridging the technology gap between and within nations (E/CN.16/2006/2);

(b) Note by the secretariat on the implementation of and progress made on decisions taken at the eighth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (E/CN.16/2006/3).

Chapter II

Organizational matters: role of the Commission in the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society

1. At its 5th meeting, on 18 May 2006, the Commission held a panel discussion on the role of the Commission in the follow-up to the World Summit for the Information Society, moderated by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the World Summit for the Information Society.

2. Presentations were made by Juan Eduardo Eguiguren, Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations Office in Geneva; Renate Bloem, President of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations; Charles Geiger, Executive Director of the World Summit for the Information Society; and Bruno Lanvin, Director E-Strategies, World Bank.

3. A discussion ensued, in which the representatives of the following countries took part: Greece, Brazil, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Jamaica, Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

4. The representative of the International Telecommunication Union participated in the discussion.

5. The representatives of the following non-governmental organizations also participated in the discussion: ENSTAT and Civil Society Working Group on Scientific Information.

Action taken by the Commission

6. At the 5th meeting, on the proposal of the Chairman, the following recommendations stemming from the panel discussion were brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

7. The panel recalled why the Commission should be mandated to undertake the follow-up to the World Summit for the Information Society:

(a) As a subsidiary body of the Council, the Commission could ensure that the follow-up would constitute an integral part of the integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits;

(b) The Commission could facilitate dialogue among the various United Nations agencies involved in the follow-up to avoid duplication;

(c) The Commission could set up a flexible agenda to keep up with rapid developments in science and technology;

(d) The Commission could adopt a multi-stakeholder approach in its work, which has proved to be successful in the World Summit for the Information Society process;

(e) The Commission should continue its existing work on science and technology for development while undertaking the new task of assisting the Council in overseeing system-wide follow-up to the World Summit for the Information Society.

Chapter III

Substantive theme: "Bridging the technology gap between and within nations"

1. The Commission considered item 2 of its agenda at its 1st to 3rd and 7th meetings, on 15, 17 and 19 May 2006. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on bridging the technology gap between and within nations (E/CN.16/2006/2) and an informal paper containing the report of a panel discussion held under the substantive theme in Rabat, Morocco, from 10 to 12 November 2005 (E/CN.16/2006/CRP.1).

2. At its 1st meeting, on 15 May, the Commission held a ministerial panel on the theme "Bridging the technology gap and the digital divide between and within nations".

3. Presentations were made by Dato Sri Jamaludin Jarjis, Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation of Malaysia; Yaye Kéne Gassama Dia, Minister of Scientific Research of Senegal; Atta-ur-Rahman, Federal Minister/Chairman of the Higher Education of Pakistan and Coordinator General of the Standing Committee on Science and Technological Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; Gaoussou Drabo, Minister of Telecommunication and New Technologies of Mali; Paolo Bruni, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations Office at Geneva; Motsoahae Thomas Thabane, Minister of Communications, Science and Technology of Lesotho; Pedro Teta, Chairman, Commission on Science and Technology for Development and Vice-Minister of Science and Technology of Angola; and Hani Mahfouz Helal, Minister of Higher Education and Minister of State for Scientific Research of Egypt.

4. The Commission then held a discussion, in which the representatives of the following countries took part: Nigeria, Jamaica, Sierra Leone, Austria, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Oman and Tunisia.

5. At the 2nd meeting, on 15 May, the Chief of the Science and Technology Section of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) introduced the report under the item.

6. At the same meeting, statements were made by the following invited speakers: Werner Arber, Nobel laureate, University of Basel, Switzerland, and the Coordinator of the United Nations Task Force on Science, Technology and Innovation of the United Nations Millennium Project.

7. Also at the 2nd meeting, the Commission began its general discussion of the substantive theme and heard statements by the representatives of Greece, Jamaica, Slovakia, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Switzerland, Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as by the observer for Malawi.

8. The representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations University also made statements.

9. At the 3rd meeting, on 17 May, the Commission heard a presentation by the head of the Investment Issues Analysis Branch, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

10. At the same meeting, the Chairman made a statement.

11. At the same meeting, the representative of UNCTAD responded to questions raised by the representatives of Jamaica, the Sudan, Greece, Germany, Sierra Leone and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

12. Also at the 3rd meeting, the Commission continued its general discussion and heard statements by the representatives of Oman, Jamaica, Germany, Peru, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the Sudan, Sierra Leone and China, as well as by the observers for Malawi, Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic and South Africa.

13. At its 7th meeting, on 19 May, the Commission heard a presentation by Robert Kahn, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and President of the Corporation for National Research Initiatives, who responded to questions raised by the representatives of Australia, Egypt and Jamaica, and by the representative of ENSTAT, a non-governmental organization.

Action taken by the Commission

Science and technology for development

14. At the 7th meeting, on 19 May, the Chairman brought to the attention of the Commission a draft resolution entitled "Science and technology for development", which had been circulated in an informal paper, in English only.

15. The Commission was informed that the draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

16. At the same meeting, following statements by the representatives of Jamaica and the Sudan, the Commission recommended the draft resolution to the Economic and Social Council for adoption (see chap. I, sect. A).

Draft decision proposed by the Chairman

17. At its 7th meeting, on 19 May, on the proposal of the Chairman, the Commission decided to take note of the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.16/2006/2) submitted under agenda item 2 (see chap. I, sect. C, decision 9/101).

Chapter IV

Implementation of and progress made on decisions taken at the eighth session of the Commission

1. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at its 3rd meeting, on 17 May 2006. It had before it a note by the secretariat on the implementation of and progress made on decisions taken at the eighth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (E/CN.16/2006/3).

2. At the same meeting, the Commission heard an introductory statement by the Chief of the Science and Technology Section of UNCTAD.

3. A statement was made by the representative of the Russian Federation.

Draft decision proposed by the Chairman

4. At its 7th meeting, on 19 May, on the proposal of the Chairman, the Commission decided to take note of the note by the secretariat (E/CN.16/2006/3) (see chap. I, sect. C, decision 9/101).

Chapter V

National country reports

1. The Commission considered item 4 of its agenda at its 4th meeting, on 17 May 2006. It had before it an informal paper containing a compilation of reports from countries on the exchange of national experiences in bridging the technology gap between and within nations (E/CN.16/2006/CRP.2).

2. At the 4th meeting, on 17 May, presentations were made by the representatives of Pakistan, Greece, Slovakia, the Sudan, Romania, India, Turkey, Oman, Belarus, Sierra Leone and Morocco, as well as by the observer for South Africa.

Chapter VI

Election of the Chairperson and other officers for the tenth session of the Commission

1. The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at its 6th meeting, on 18 May 2006, at which it elected by acclamation the following officers for its tenth session:

Chairman:

Štefan Morávek (Slovakia)

Vice-Chairpersons:

Motsoahae Thomas Thabane (Lesotho)
Hilal Al-Hinai (Oman)
Bernd Michael Rode (Austria)
Arnoldo Ventura (Jamaica)

2. Also at the 6th meeting, on 18 May, the Chairman of the tenth session of the Commission made a statement.

Chapter VII

Provisional agenda and documentation for the tenth session of the Commission

1. The Commission considered item 6 of its agenda at its 7th meeting, on 19 May 2006. It had before it an informal paper containing the draft provisional agenda and documentation for its tenth session.

2. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the draft provisional agenda and documentation for its tenth session and recommended it to the Economic and Social Council for adoption (see chap. I, sect. B).

Chapter VIII

Adoption of the report of the Commission on its ninth session

1. At the 7th meeting, on 19 May 2006, the Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur of the Commission, Štefan Morávek (Slovakia), introduced the draft report of the Commission on its ninth session (E/CN.16/2006/L.1).

2. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the draft report on its ninth session and entrusted the Rapporteur with its completion.

Chapter IX
Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development held its ninth session at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 15 to 19 May 2006. The Commission held seven meetings (1st to 7th).

2. The session was opened by the Chairman, Pedro Sebastião Teta (Angola), who also made a statement.

3. At the 1st meeting, on 15 May, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development addressed the Commission.

4. At the same meeting, the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunications Union addressed the Commission.

5. The Commission heard an address by the Minister of Communication Technologies of Tunisia, National Coordinator of the second phase of the World Summit for the Information Society.

6. Also at the same meeting, the President of the Economic and Social Council addressed the Commission.

B. Attendance

7. The session was attended by representatives of 33 States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers for intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also attended. The list of participants for the session is contained in document E/CN.16/2006/INF/1.

C. Election of officers

8. At its 7th meeting of the eighth session, on 26 May 2005, the Commission elected the following members of the Bureau of its ninth session by acclamation:

Chairman:

Pedro Sebastião Teta (Angola)

Vice-Chairpersons:

Hisham Khatib (Jordan)
Rolanda Predescu (Romania)
Bernd Michael Rode (Austria)
Arnoldo Ventura (Jamaica)

9. At its 6th meeting of the ninth session, on 18 May, the Commission elected Štefan Morávek (Slovakia) as Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur to replace Rolanda Predescu (Romania), who could no longer carry out her duties as Vice-Chairperson.

D. Agenda and organization of work

10. At its 1st meeting, on 15 May, the Commission adopted its provisional agenda and approved its organization of work, as contained in documents E/CN.16/2006/1 and Corr.1. The agenda read as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters: role of the Commission in the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society.
2. Substantive theme: "Bridging the technology gap between and within nations".
3. Implementation of and progress made on decisions taken at the eighth session of the Commission.
4. National country reports.
5. Election of the Chairperson and other officers for the tenth session of the Commission.
6. Provisional agenda and documentation for the tenth session of the Commission.
7. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its ninth session.

E. Participation of intergovernmental organizations

11. At its 1st meeting, on 15 May, the Commission agreed to the participation of the South Centre, an intergovernmental organization, in the work of the Commission at the ninth session.

Annex

List of documents before the Commission at its ninth session

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/CN.16/2006/1 and Corr.1	1	Provisional annotated agenda and organization of work
E/CN.16/2006/2	2	Report of the Secretary-General on bridging the technology gap between and within nations
E/CN.16/2006/3	3	Note by the secretariat on the implementation of and progress made on decisions taken at the eighth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development
E/CN.16/2006/L.1	7	Draft report of the Commission on its ninth session
E/CN.16/2006/CRP.1*	2	Summary report prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat on bridging the technology gap between and within nations
E/CN.16/2006/CRP.2*	4	Country reports: exchange of national experiences in bridging the technology gap between and within nations

* Documents are available at http://stdev/unctad.org/.

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